

CERTIFICATION PROCESS AND RULES

Nordic Casemix Centre

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1. NordDRG Certification Process

Developers interested in producing and marketing authorized NordDRG grouper software must apply for a "Certificate of Acceptance". Without this certificate the software may not be marketed as NordDRG compliant.

The specifications of the NordDRG definition tables and the NordDRG Manual may be used to produce DRG grouper software. These specifications can be used to produce grouper software using different computing languages, different architectures and for different computer platforms. Preliminary versions of the NordDRG definition tables may be used, if available. However, only the final versions of the definition tables are committed to issue. As a rule, the tables from previous years may be used for technical testing of new grouper software.

The result of DRG grouping produced by that software must be identical with the results from the Nordic reference grouper in order for a product to be considered as NordDRG compliant. After acceptance, a certificate will be issued with an announcement on the NordDRG website.

In summary, the certification process requires that the developer checks their grouper software using predefined test data to create a report of the grouping results. These are to be compared with the correct DRG grouping. The developer returns the test material together with a signed report, stating the correctness and validity of the grouping results. In addition, the developer should be prepared to send working versions of the batch and/or interactive grouper software for additional testing to NordDRG administration.

2. Other terms

It is expected that each developer will have some extra functions, unique features in their products aimed at making their product attractive in the marketplace. These features are outside the scope of the NordDRG testing.

Certified products will produce correct results but may differ in other aspects (e.g. user interface, computer hardware requirements and processing time). Processing time may vary depending on the interface written to the grouper and the type of processing performed. This is also outside the testing. However, defects in the interface can cause wrong grouping results if it allows incorrect information to be fed into the grouping engine. If necessary, the grouper products are tested based on the existing hardware and operating systems available within CA or external sites.

3. Third party information

In order to provide authorization for developers to distribute NordDRG grouper software there are a number of terms in relation to the third party (end users):

- The certified version of the software should be identified to the end user using standard terms. For example, the version of the grouper software should be identified in advertising, packaging and within products relating to the grouper software as "NordDRG", version number (usually year) and name of national version as explained in the NordDRG Manual
- The NordDRG owners are not liable for any third party. The NordDRG owners make no warranty regarding the functionality of the version of the software to any third party. The third party is prohibited from exploiting the NordDRG system

4. Acceptance testing

Definition tables in dBase® format with test data are available upon request from the NordDRG Administration. The test data is to be used by developer to check their grouper software and to report the grouping results.

The test database contains the correct DRG for each case according to the Nordic reference grouper. The variables in the test database are described in the NordDRG Manual under the section 'The principles of NordDRG' and further under the section 'Test database input format'. Since the file is delivered in standard dBase® format the structure of the file unambiguously indicates the included variables.

The software developer is expected to apply the developed grouper on the test database. The grouping result (new DRG) is added to the original test database as a new column.

5. Evaluation

After checking that the results are correct, the developer returns the test report together with a signed written statement stating the correctness and validity of the results. The exact version of the NordDRG definition tables that were used should be stated as well as the software version name. The developer should also be prepared to send a working version of the batch grouper software for additional testing. In the case of interactive grouper software it is the responsibility of the developer to validate that the interactive grouping results are identical to the batch grouping results.

A copy of the batch grouper software should also be sent for reference and possible additional testing. Reanalysis of the test database and testing of the grouper will be performed only occasionally. If interactive grouper software is going to be marketed, a copy of the interactive grouper software must also be sent.

The developer must guarantee that the batch version and the interactive version give the same result. The Nordic Casemix Centre guarantees that the copies of the grouper software will not be distributed. In the case of national versions, however, the Nordic Casemix Centre has the right to distribute the material to the national owner organizations for additional testing.

6. Certificate of acceptance

The Nordic Casemix Centre will check the results reported and the statement of correctness. The acceptance test is restricted to evaluation of the correctness using the predefined test data and in relation to the signed statement from the developer. No other criteria (e.g. special features, performance, and etcetera) are used in authorization of the software.

Following a successful evaluation, a "Certificate of Acceptance" is issued, testifying that the grouper software at issue conforms to NordDRG standards. These include the right to use the name NordDRG for that particular version.

The NordDRG, the NordDRG definition tables and the NordDRG Manual are the intellectual property of the National NordDRG owners represented by the Nordic Casemix Centre. Reference to the CA should always be made in products and documentation of products based on NordDRG definitions. In national versions of NordDRG products, a reference must also be made to the national owner of the version at issue.

7. Withdrawal of certificate

If the material or reports delivered by the software developer are in any way found to be incorrect the certificate will be withdrawn. The authorization is valid as long as a particular version is used. The Nordic Casemix Centre will issue a new version each year. However, if no changes are needed, no new version will be published. If the NordDRG Steering group decides that changes to the definitions are necessary, a second version may be issued in one year. The terms of delivering extra software versions (based on such updated definitions) to a third party (end user) is outside the responsibility of the Nordic Casemix Centre.